

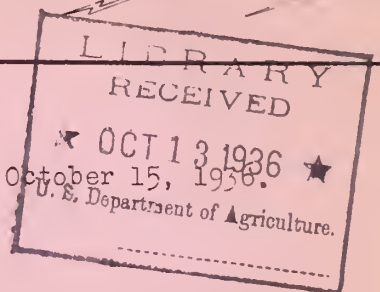
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EX 3 HR  
HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, October 15, 1936.  
U. S. Department of Agriculture.



(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "HOW WELL FED ARE AMERICANS?" Information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor, and the Bureau of Home Economics of the Department of Agriculture.

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Information on how well people at different levels of income in America are able to feed themselves and their families is being gathered in a nation-wide survey of the spending habits of families of wage earners and lower salaried clerical workers. This survey was made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in order to give them a correct scale on which to base an up-to-date form of their cost of living index which they publish twice a year. The study was designed to show a cross-section of normal living costs, so it did not include people living at abnormally low levels. It did not include unemployed people or families on relief. Every family from which facts were gathered had at least one wage earner who had worked over a thousand hours in at least 36 weeks of the year, and the family had at least \$500 income for the year. So the report gives no facts on the diets of people at the very lowest economic levels nor at any levels above those of the wage earner and lower salaried clerical worker. But what we are able to pass on to you from Washington will give an idea of the difference in how people eat at different low levels of what the economists call "economic wellbeing."

As part of the survey, the investigators collected some 3,000 food records from representative city workers' families. These records show every single purchase of food by these families for one whole week. Trained field workers helped the housewives take inventories of the food supplies on hand at the beginning and end of the time, and visited them every single day of the recording period to help make sure that the records were complete down to the last pint of milk or pound of beans.

Then the Bureau of Home Economics took a certain small, completed section of these records, which covered the food purchases of some families in North Atlantic cities in a winter week, and analyzed these records to see how well the families making the purchases were likely to have been nourished. The nutrition experts took nine different food elements which are significant gauges of the nutritional quality of a diet and which have been investigated sufficiently to give scientists some fair idea of the quota of them needed by the body. They set up allowances of these nutrients which would include a safety margin to cover the variations between different people's needs and ability to make use of the nutrients, and for other possibilities like losses in cooking. Then they compared actual purchases of the families studied with the nutritional yardsticks.



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To find out how the diets of the families varied with the amount of money they had to spend, the economists divided up the families studies into three levels of economic wellbeing, grouping them according to how much they could spend on all the needs of each member of the family. By that method a family making \$1200 a year with only two people to support on it would be in a higher group than a family making \$2500 a year with six people to support on it.

The results indicated that the families in the top level of these three low economic levels bought food containing enough of the known nutrients to reach to or above the "adequate" mark on the yardstick set up by the nutritionists. The average food supply of those families in the middle group had enough -- or more than enough -- of the nine primary nutritive elements except for the mineral calcium. On the other hand, most of the families in the lowest of the three expenditure groups bought an average supply of food that failed to meet the allowances of one or more important food factors.

The families which had more per member to spend bought more food. But that's not all.

The kind of food they bought was different. The families that had the most to spend in relation to their family needs bought a great deal more of eggs, milk, meats, and fruits and vegetables than those families who had the least to spend in relation to family needs.

So striking was the indication that as people have more money to spend they buy a more adequate diet, that one economist, who studied an early report of this survey, even before the Home Economists had had a chance to analyze the figures from a detailed nutritional point of view, was able to draw this official conclusion: Here is what was published: (quoting) "These figures indicate that as total family funds increase, workers buy diets more nearly meeting their own nutritional needs and those of their families." (End of quotation).

